Creation Day 2
Genesis 1:6-8
90-213

This is message number six in our look at Genesis chapter 1 in the study of origins. Some people have asked me, “Are you going to do the entire Book of Genesis?” and the answer is, “No.” Others have asked me, “How many messages will there be?” And the answer is, “I don’t know at this particular point.” As you might imagine, we’re just taking what comes in the text. I was also asked tonight if I had preached on this before. And the answer to that is no. This is the first time I’ve really gone verse by verse through the account of creation. Obviously, I’ve studied it through the years and, of course, writing the notes for the Study Bible as well, going into it in some depth. But this is the first time for me, so I’m sharing with you as I go. And that’s the richest way to do it actually.

Now, as we come to Genesis chapter 1, we come to that now very familiar verse to us. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” and that answers the questions of origin. The heavens and the earth, which was a Jewish phrase substituting for the absence of a word for universe by which they described the universe. And it answers the question of origin. “In the beginning God created the universe.” Now, we’ve been adding to that as we’ve been working our way into the text of Genesis a little bit. And let me sum up what the Word of God in Genesis teaches about origin. It is really unmistakable. It is plain language. There is an inescapable account here in Genesis telling us about the origin of the universe.

And, summing it up, this is what it says. The eternal God, at some point in the past, created out of nothing, without preexisting material, the universe as it is now in six solar days. He captures creation on the sixth day by creating man in His own image. That is intelligent, with personality, with self-consciousness and cognition, or the ability to think and reason. This creation occurred in six days. The seventh day it was over, and God rested from creating. It occurred about 6000years ago, and the entire creation was mature and aged at the instant of its creation. At the time of creation, death did not exist. In fact, no corrupting influence of any kind existed. And that’s why God looked at His creation and said, “It is very good.” There was no death. There was no corrupting influence. Therefore, there couldn’t have been any animals dying, any plants dying. There couldn’t have been any kind of natural selection process going on. There couldn’t have been any survival of the fittest because everything survived in that perfect creation.

Death and corruption entered the creation for the first time when Adam and Eve sinned and disobeyed God. Then came death and then came corruption. But that is described in chapter 3 and has nothing to do with the six days of creation. Later on, after the fall, the surface of the now-cursed earth was reshaped drastically by a worldwide flood. It was so deep that it completely covered the mountains all over the face of the earth. It was that cataclysmic world flood that drastically reshaped the surface of the earth, which also deposited fossil beds all over the globe. That flood wiped out all humanity, with the exception of eight people and the animals in Noah’s ark. They alone were the survivors.

Now that is the Genesis record of origin…creation, the fall, the flood reshaping cataclysmically the

face of the now corrupted cursed earth. Great judgment falls on all of humanity so that only eight survive. All of us then are the descendants of those eight. Noah, his three sons, Noah's wife and their wives. That is the Genesis record.

And let me say something to you that maybe you can just kind of file in your permanently useful file. Science is not a hermeneutic for interpreting Genesis. Or, for that matter, for interpreting any other portion of Scripture. Science is not a hermeneutic. It is not a principle of interpretation. The Bible does not bow to science. The accuracy of the Genesis text is no different than the accuracy of any other portion of Scripture. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. All Scripture is God-breathed. All Scripture comes not by any private interpretation, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus summed it up when he said, "Thy Word is truth." The Bible is true whether you're talking about Revelation and eschatological prophecy or whether you're talking about Genesis and historic origins. The Bible is true whether you're talking the history of Israel or the history of the Canaanites. The Bible is true whether you're talking about salvation or sanctification, whether you're talking about the life of Jesus or the theology of Jesus. Whatever the Bible says is absolutely true. And the Bible is as true in Genesis as it is anywhere else and everywhere else.

Furthermore, since origins are not repeatable, they are outside the realm of science. Since origins were not observable, since there was only one there and that was God, no one can comment on origins but God. And so what you have in Genesis is the only and accurate firsthand eyewitness account of origins by the Creator, Himself. Now, in spite of that very clear-cut approach to the Word of God, many people, including Christians, have turned to science and turned to scientists who speak authoritatively on Genesis.

In fact, there are theologians, many of them, bible commentators, pastors, well-known, popular pastors and preachers, some of whom you would even know, who deny the Genesis account. They flatly deny the Genesis account because they accept evolutionary science to one degree or another. I've said this to you all the way along, and I'll repeat it again without going into all the verification. Science has proven nothing that negates the Genesis record. In fact, the Genesis record is what answers the mystery of science. But, sadly, Christians and Christian theologians, bible commentators, Christian college professors, as well as pastors and teachers, have denied the Genesis account, being intimidated by science.

Now, there is one book. There is one book that comments on Genesis, of great note. One book that I would say is absolutely authoritative, and it's the only authoritative book. One true, infallible, inerrant, authoritative commentary that has been written on Genesis. One unarguable divine book, one heavenly inspired commentary on Genesis that speaks with absolute authority, is to be unchallenged in its truthfulness. And, frankly, for me, this Book forever settles the issue of the accuracy of Genesis. What Book is it? It's the New Testament. It's the New Testament.

It was not written by any scientist and not even by a creation scientist. It was not written by theologians or a theologian. It was written by simple men, who were given the words to write by God, Himself, so that the Creator is the author. You have in Genesis the account of the creation. You have, in the New Testament, the Creator's inspired commentary on the Genesis record. If you go to the New Testament, you will find there is an affirmation there of six-day creation. There is an affirmation of divine fiat, or instantaneous creation. There is an affirmation of man being made in the image of God, an affirmation of Adam being created and then Eve. There is an affirmation of the fall there in very specific terms. There is an affirmation of the flood there in very specific terms. There is

an affirmation of Noah and the surviving family of Noah. All of the Genesis record is very carefully referred to by the inspired New Testament.

Hubert Thomas, in his French book on Genesis 1 to 11, in the introduction, writes this, “In effect, three main points are demonstrated by reading the list we provide. These three points confirm that the New Testament can in no case whatsoever be appealed to in order to sustain any sort of evolutionary theory.” He’s absolutely right. You can’t find anything about evolution in Genesis. It’s not there. You can’t find it anywhere in the Old Testament and you can’t find anywhere in the New Testament where, commenting on Genesis, somebody casts it into an evolutionary light or into the light of legend or fantasy or some kind of poetic license.

And then Thomas goes on to give three reasons. “First, without exception, references to creation and especially the citations of Genesis 1 to 11 point to historical events. They are no different than the historical death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Golgotha. As far as the New Testament is concerned, creation ex nihilo…that is out of nothing…and the creation of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, as far as the New Testament is concerned there is no legend and no parable. All deal with persons and events of historical and universal significance.”

“Secondly,” writes Thomas, “without exception creation is always mentioned as a unique event which took place at a particular moment in past time,” not something that’s going on all the time, as is the theory of evolution. He further says, “Creation took place, it was finished. Events occurred which corrupted the world, and now it awaits a new creation which will take place in the future at a given moment.”

“Thirdly,” Thomas says, “recitations of creation given in Genesis 1 to 3 are considered in the New Testament to be literally true, historical and of surpassing importance. The New Testament doctrine based on these citations, out of Genesis 1 to 3, would be without any validity and even erroneous if the events of Genesis were not historically true. For example, consider the entry of sin into the world. If Adam were not the head of the whole human race, then Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is not the head of the new creation,” end quote. He’s referring to Romans where it says as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. And clearly the New Testament writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saw sin and death enter the world through the very historic man, Adam, and through his very historic act of disobedience.

And so, that sort of sums up the issue for us. The New Testament makes no small number of references to Genesis and to creation. And it does so very naturally. It doesn’t…it doesn’t come across affected. It doesn’t come across as sort of incredulous. It doesn’t come across saying, “Oh I know this is hard to believe and I know you’re going…you’re going to really have a tough time swallowing this, but this is how it is.” It doesn’t do that. There is no attempt to defend, no attempt to explain somebody’s incredulity, it’s simply stated as fact.

Now, for example, Matthew 13:35, “I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world,” indicating there was a point in time when the world was founded. Mark 13:19, “For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created.” John 1:3, “All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.” That is there alone a verse that would immediately cancel the creation of anything by chance by some random process. Everything made was made by God.

Acts 4:24, “Lord, Thou art God which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them.” That’s as comprehensive as you can say it. Acts 14:15, “That you should turn from these vanities, these idols under the living God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein.” Everything, the heaven, the earth, the sea and everything that inhabits all of that. Romans 1:20, “For the invisible things of Him…that is of God…from the creation of the world are clearly seen.” Second Corinthians 4:6, “For God…and we studied this last Sunday night…who commanded the light to shine out of darkness.” That’s exactly what He did on day one. He commanded the light to shine out of darkness.

Colossians 1:16, “By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, all things were created by Him and for Him.” Hebrews 1:10, “And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of Thine hands.” And we’re going to see that a little later on day two. Hebrews 11:3, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.” He spoke them into existence so that those things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” That’s ex nihilo. He created things which are seen but they weren’t made from anything which existed before.

In Matthew 19 Jesus said, “Have you not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female?” Again, speaking of mankind as being the direct result of the creative act of God. Acts 17:26 says, “God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth and has determined the times before appointed in the bounds of their habitation.” He is the creator of all the nations of men. First Corinthians 11:8 and 9, “For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man, neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man.” Again created. First Timothy 2:13 and 14, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” Romans 5:14 takes us to the fall, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Romans 5:17, “By one man’s sin, Adam’s, death reigned by one.” First Corinthians 15:21, “Since by man came death”…by man meaning Christ…“came the resurrection from the dead.”

And I remind you again of 2 Peter 3:5 and 6, how that Peter refers to the flood and even to the pre-shaped world when it was engulfed in water, when he says that, “By the Word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water,” and so forth as we noted last time. Ephesians 3:9, “The mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ.” James 3:9, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God.” Again, God is the One who made man in His image.

Revelation 4:11, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” Revelation 10:6, “And swear by Him that lives forever and ever who created heaven and the things that therein are and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things that therein are.” Revelation 14:7, “Worship Him that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.” Romans 1:25, “Man worships and serves the creature more than the Creator.” And so it goes. Hebrews 2:10, “It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things.” And so it goes. Over and over and over and over in the New Testament creation account is referred to.

Now as we have been saying, evolution has been introduced really as an atheistic alternative, as a godless alternative. And evolution demands irrational faith in impotent chance. Evolution can’t

happen. It is impossible. It has been proven by science that it can't happen, as we saw, because of DNA, genetic code information systems. Creation is rational faith in Almighty God. Evolution is irrational faith in impotent chance. Evolution is…is really naturalism. Any sort of evolution is a form of naturalism.

Naturalism believes that God exists only in the mind of non-intellectuals, only in the mind of low-level religious people. Naturalism says nature is all there is. That's really all there is. And that is virtually the assumption that underlies all natural science. It underlies all naturalistic, humanistic philosophy. It underlies all intellectual work. It underlies all morality, or better, immorality. In other words, the underpinning of our entire culture is this idea of nature is all there is.

If naturalism is true, then man created God, God didn't create man. And belief in God is nothing more than a groundless superstition, and more importantly, since it is a superstition, we don't have to listen to anything in the foolish Bible, certainly not the Ten Commandments, the moral laws, and so forth. So, we aren't interested in what religious people think. They're a threat. They're non-intellectuals. They're…they're more than a bother. They intrude on our moral freedom. In fact, we don't even talk about morality anymore. We just talk about rights and values, don't we? Rights and values. And rights and values are to be decided on by every individual.

People don't do wrong because of sin. With all…in the wake of all this massacre up in Littleton, Colorado, you haven't heard anybody talking about sin. People don't do wrong because of sin. They do wrong because somehow they overextended their rights. Somehow they had warped values. They are psychologized rather than theologized. There is no Creator, there is no moral law, there is no moral judge. There is no purpose for life. There is no reason for life except to get through it as happy as you can. There is no destiny. And there is no true theology. Folks, I want to take you there 'cause that's the most important thing. There is, in a naturalist's world, the humanist's world, the evolutionary world, no true theology. So a theologian is really a useless interruption. In fact, they would probably hope that theologians are so low on the evolutionary chain as to be unable to survive. There's no such thing as a true theology because there's no such thing as a true God.

The issue for evolutionists is not that Genesis is not believable. It's just a simple, straightforward account. It's not that they want to argue about whether Genesis is true or not, I mean that…they've already won that battle. And that's why I'm going back there. Listen, they've already convinced most of the Christian world that Genesis isn't true. They have successfully attacked with their relentless theories and scientific illusions and sleight of hand and misrepresentation. They have successfully attacked Genesis and gotten most of the evangelical Christian world to believe that Genesis is not a true account. But that's not really…they're just not trying to debunk Genesis. I mean, that in itself doesn't gain them much ground.

The real issue with evolutionists is that if God created man and cares so greatly about what he does as to identify eternal consequences for his behavior, that is a serious threat to their sinful pleasures. The naturalistic evolutionist hates God and loves sin. Sometime you should read Paul Johnson's book, the historian's book on the *Intellectuals*. Read the…read the biographies. It's absolutely riveting reading, the biographies of the people who shaped western society. They were perverse, to put it mildly, in their own personal lives. The naturalist hates God and loves sin. The theistic evolutionist who wants to bring evolution and impose it on Genesis and kind of marry it up with God, he will say he loves God and he will say he hates sin, but he actually loves God a little and his academic reputation a lot.

Now let me tell you something, and I'm not blowing my own horn. It just so happens that it does refer to me. The governing discipline in the world, the governing discipline in the world, the governing discipline in the matter of life on this planet, the most important realm of thought, the most important arena of understanding is not science. Did you hear that? Now you would think it was. You would think it was. That's what our whole society goes back to all the time. And what do we do? I picked up three magazines this afternoon to read them, Newsweek, Time magazine. One of them had some kind of a missing link on the cover. The other one promised on the pages on the inside to show the difference in the brain makeup of a criminal from a normal person, and it had some kind of photographs of some medical analysis of brain patterns. And then the discussion is all about the processes of evolution that lead to or away from that kind of behavior.

Listen, the queen of sciences in our world today, in the sense of knowledge is naturalistic science. They're supposed to have all the answers for everything and the fact is they don't. The governing discipline in the matter of life in the universe at every single point is not science. The governing discipline is theology. The only way you will ever understand the universe, the only way you will ever understand the history of man, the only way you will ever understand behavior and why people do what they do, the only way you will ever understand the flow of life and where we came from and where we're going is when you understand a true theology, the only way you'll ever understand it.

We cannot then allow our theology to vacate its throne at the beginning of the Bible and take a footstool while science ascends the throne. Science and every other discipline, every other realm or arena or sphere or paradigm of human thought bows to the king of all disciplines. And the king of all disciplines is a true theology, and a true theology is a theology that comes from the Word of God. Theologians aren't respected today. That's tragic. And in some measure they're not respected because they've jettisoned their position. Theologians aren't respected who hold their ground because they're the enemy.

There's a concerted effort to paint them as non-intellectuals, people who are bound up in superstition and fantasy. But every one of you, as a Christian…and I am going to elevate you, you don't even have to take any classes. I'm going to do this to you just…you are all theologians. And I want you to understand what I mean by that. You understand theology. You may not understand every nuance of theology.

You may not be able to tell the difference between sublapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and a Labrador retriever. You may…I just threw that in. You may not be able to explain the doctrine of the *imago* or every aspect of kenosis. You may not know all the terminology. You may not know all of the ins and outs of every theological concept. But let me tell you something, folks, you are all theologians because you know the true and living God, and you know the means by which He is known. And furthermore, you know the Word of the living God which is the substance of all truth in theology.

Give evolution the throne and you make the Bible the servant of man and you court disaster. But the queen of sciences today is natural…naturalism. Everything goes back to it, and naturalism is defined in evolutionary terms. So what rules our whole society is evolution. It's even gotten into theology to the point now…I am reading a number of different resources lately where the writer is saying, "God Himself is also evolving." Oh yeah. This is God in process of becoming what He would like to become. So even God has been swept up and God is just another little piece of the evolutionary process.

Give evolution the throne and it takes over everything. Give it the throne in the first few verses of the first book of the first page of the Bible and you've abdicated at the very outset. And in a world that evolves, it's very hard to have any fixed points. That's why educators today are relativists. And they're basically relativists on everything. You know, you hear all this about we've got problems in the schools, and you've heard it lately. "Well what are we going to do? What are we going to do? We can't have kids going shooting up the schools. What are we going to do about this? We've got to teach them some standards. We've got to teach them some standards."

So I have a great solution. Just take into every single school the very finest Bible teachers in a given community and let them have the kids every day for a week, and just let them teach the Word of God to them. That's the standard. That's the absolute standard. Fat chance. That isn't going to happen. And until it happens, things are going to get worse 'cause there are no answers. What they're talking about…and when the educators get into this and they say, "We need help, we got to do something," they use this phrase, "Values clarification." Values again.

What does values clarification mean? Well they…it basically…you know, they've got it down to you work hard and you don't hurt people. Moral reasoning which means I have all the freedoms to do whatever I want but my freedom stops where your nose begins. If I want to go out and beat my head against the wall, and if I want to go out and behave in a certain fashion, that's fine. But I cannot take a weapon and shoot you because now I've invaded your space. So I have to learn to reason morally and know that my freedoms have some moral limitation and the limitation is where, by society's standards I've stepped over some line that effects you.

By the way, it gets very, very fuzzy, and the society is so fuzzy on it they don't know what to do about it. They're letting people produce video games, television programs, music, movies that cross the line by miles in creating evil influences in the lives of young people that are as deadly as if somebody put a gun to their head and fired it. There is no hope for a society where naturalistic evolution is the queen of the sciences, where everything has to answer to that. Students are supposed to be given values clarification by teachers who don't have any moral standards. They're supposed to be taught moral reasoning by people who don't have any absolutes. And then they're told they need to forge their own lifestyle. No authority, no sin, no fixed divine law, no shame, no guilt, no set consequences.

But there's one thing in our society that they're not relativistic about. Do you know what it is? Evolution. That is the one dominating absolute in our society. If you say you don't believe in evolution, you literally are viewed as a moron, somebody who doesn't have all his marbles, somebody who is bereft of normal reasoning ability. There's a sweeping relativity until it comes to the one fixed absolute that makes the relative system work, and that is evolution. You see, if you come and say, "Well, you know, I don't believe in evolution; I believe in divine creation by God," the whole relativistic house of cards collapses cause you have to have…you have to have randomness, free choice, free expression.

You can't have fixed absolutes, you can't have the lawgiver and a law and a judge and all of that. So the one absolute that perseveres in the midst of this relativity is the absolute of evolution. And that is they are absolutely convinced beyond any argument that everything that exists today is a result of chance and random processes. As one writer said, and I'll never forget the statement, "The universe as we know it is just one of those things that happens from time to time."

But contrary to all of that, theology is the queen of science. This theology is what is the most important realm of thought. Theology is the controlling element in all of human understanding. And an unwavering faith in the accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible is at the heart of all sound theology. And it starts with believing the Genesis account. That is critical to a Christian worldview. As I told you a few weeks ago, the Master's College participates in the Christian College Coalition, 110 Christian colleges, of which five or six affirm the Genesis account. So we have a hundred Christian colleges that do not have a Christian worldview. What is a Christian college? Well, I get exercised about that but let's go to the text. I'm trying to do two things in these messages, give you some…some rational thought, a little philosophical thought, some scientific stuff before we slide into the text, but let's go to the text.

Let's look at day one. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was formless and void"…desolate and uninhabited. Remember, that's what we told you that means. It was desolate and uninhabited. It hadn't yet been shaped or inhabited by any living thing. And it was completely engulfed with darkness. "The earth"…it says…"was covered with the deep, covered with the water." Says, "The darkness was over the surface of the deep," which is an Old Testament word for the ocean, "and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

So what you had, day one, is God creates time, space, and matter. Those are the elements…time, space, and matter. God creates them out of nothing. And you have this *tohu* and *bohu*, this unformed, unshaped and uninhabited mass of these elements. And this earth that He has…the elements are mixed perhaps like so much mud, as it were, not sorted out, and it's covered with water completely and then surrounded by darkness.

And then on day one, verse 3, "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." So God created light. "Saw the light that it was good, and separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, the darkness He called night, and there was evening and there was morning, one day." So, on the first day God created the essential elements of time, space, and matter. God then added light. He fixed the light/dark cycle in the permanent day/night continuum of 24-hour solar days.

That's why it says in verse 5 there was evening and there was morning. And somebody says, "Well, the sun hasn't been created, or the moon." That's fine. God could still cycle the light any way He wanted until He attached that light to the heavenly bodies, which He does, as we'll see later on. So, basically, the first day the elements are created and they're left in a shapeless and uninhabited form and surrounded by darkness. Then light is created and there's a mingling of light and darkness in the normal 24-hour cycle and that's day one.

Let's go to day two. God continued to shape those elements into a habitable environment for the life that He would create. And then God said in verse 6, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse and it was so. And God called the expanse heaven and there was evening and there was morning, a second day." All right, let's jump in and see what happened here. Day one, God separated light from darkness.

Day two, God separated heaven from earth. That's what the expanse is referring to. Day three, as

we shall see, God separated water on earth from dry land. So day one, day two, day three, series of separations. Before God can create life He has to separate light from darkness, and create the continuum of light and dark in the 24-hour solar day. He has to separate the heaven from the earth, which He does on day two. Then He has to separate the water that is now completely engulfing on day one and two, He has to separate that from the dry land so there's a place for the fish in the sea and the land life on dry land. Thus the universe is made ready for life in the first three days, a very reasonable approach. Light from dark, heaven from earth, dry land from water.

Let's look at it then in more particulars. Verse 6, "Then God said," and again I remind you that creation was simply by the Word of God. He spoke things into existence. As day two began, when the dawning of the day came, the universe was light and dark, the earth was an undifferentiated mass of elements completely engulfed in water. But then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate from the waters from the waters." And this is quite interesting. On day one the earth was covered all with water. On day two, God separated that water in to two places. That's what it's saying here. He put an expanse in between and some water was above and some remained on the earth.

So you have the water that was still on the earth and now some water that's separated and taken above. That's exactly what it is saying. And in between those two elements of water there is an expanse. Now the word "expanse" is the Hebrew word *raqia*. It means…interesting word. It means expanse. It means spread out thinness. And looking in the Old Testament to find its usage, in Exodus 39:3 when they were making things for the worship of God in the tabernacle, it says they got gold and they hammered out…they hammered out sheets of gold. They flattened it out and spread it out and hammered it into thinness. They use the same verb as the verb expanse.

The picture is of a thin area that God just cuts right through the waters that surround the earth. All the way around the earth is this water and God just cuts as if you would go in there with a knife and just cut all the way through that sphere of the undifferentiated mass of elements of the earth, separating it into two parts. There's still the part that's spherical and the water surrounding it, but now there's water above it, separated by this expanse. Expanse is intended to convey the idea of space…space.

Look at verse 8. God called this expanse what? Heaven. It's what we understand as heaven. It's what we understand as the space above us. Heaven is *shamayim*, and it literally means the sky, or the skies. It refers to the universe and the space above us. So there was no heaven. There was no space as we know until the second day, and God just cut all the way around that sphere and released some of that water and sent it up, creating between the waters above and water below space. The Jewish writer, Cassuto, says, "From this we may infer that immediately after its formation the firmament occupied of its own accord the place appointed for it by the will of God, which is the sight of the heavens as we know it." Literally created space. "Thus as soon as the firmament was established in the midst of the layer of water, it began to rise, arching like a vault."

That's very graphic. God cuts that water and then it just begins to rise, and it begins to expand until it's going further and further, creating in between space. Cassuto says, "In its course…in the course it expands arching like a vault, in the course of its upward expansion it lifted at the same time the upper waters resting on top of it." It just took them right up. "This marked a considerable advance in the marshalling of the components of the universe. Above now stands the vault of heaven, surrounded by the upper waters. Beneath stretches the expanse of lower waters, that is the waters of the vast sea which still covers all the heavy undifferentiated matter on the earth. "The universe"…he

writes…“is beginning to take shape.”

Now that’s a very reasonable account written by Moses. At this…at the…as you go back into ancient literature you…you read some other legends that developed in the Mesopotamian mythology that are kind of interesting to compare with this. And pagan stories, there’s a lot of them to try to explain creation. None of them teaches evolution. But, for example, the legends of Mesopotamia say that after the God, Marduk…and by the way, you can name him a lot of different names depending on what the nation you belong to or what version you want…but the God, Marduk, had vanquished Tiamat, the goddess of the world ocean, depicted as a great and mighty sea monster, as well as the other monsters and monstrosities that she had created to aid her in her combat. And after he had slain his chief enemy with his weapons, he cut her carcass horizontally and divided her into two halves which lay one on top of the other and out of the upper half he formed a heaven and out of the lower half he made the earth, which included the sea.

You can read that whole story in the Babylonian account of creation. And it says actually in the text, translated, “He split her like a fish into two parts. The one half of her he set up and laid there with the beams of the heavens. He pulled down a bar and stationed a watch,” which refers to the earth below. In summary then the Babylonian priestly myth, which the Greeks also followed, says that the upper part of the universe and the earth here is the result of the cutting in half of the body of Tiamat, or Tamtu, or Tamte, a lot of different names. And that’s just…I just tell you that to show you how bizarre and silly those legends are.

But what the Bible says is completely reasonable. God took the waters way up…way up. Left some still engulfing the earth, and in between created the separator between the waters which was the expanse we call heaven, space…the vast space of the universe. Go to verse 7, and verse 7 basically reiterates, “And God made the expanse and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse and it was so.” And, again, he repeats the same thing again just to be sure you get it. There is an expanse and God separated it. The waters went up, some of the waters stayed below, He created space in between.

Just a couple of footnotes here. It’s important to understand that this is all creative. That is to say it is all creative power going on here of proportions that are just absolutely beyond our capacity to comprehend. And I want you to…I say that in reference to verse 7 because the word used there, God made the expanse. And some people have said, “Well this isn’t create, this isn’t the word *bārā*.” This is another word, *asah*, in Hebrew. Does it signify some different activity? But does it signify that this…and do we need to make a distinction here? A lot of times Bible teachers will make distinctions that they shouldn’t make because all languages have synonyms, and even words that have shades of variation can be used in a synonym fashion.

And the question here is does the word “made” change the actual action of God? And the answer is no. It does not signify any different activity on God’s part than creating out of nothing. In fact, over in chapter 2 verse 3 the verse ends, God rested the seventh day, blessed it, and sanctified it. Rested from all His work which God has created and made. And there you have those two words bara and asah and, basically, presented as synonyms. And I think that’s a wonderful note that the Spirit of God has placed there so we wouldn’t worry about whether there was some distinction.

The word bara is the defining word. And here in this context it…it means to create something out of nothing, or to put it another way, to do something that transcends normal ability, to do something that

can't be done. That's bara in this text. And made is just a synonym to use another word referring to the same thing. Now bara can be used simply for something normal. It's used in Isaiah 54:16, "Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire and coals and brings out a weapon." God…57:19 of Isaiah, says, "Creating the praise of the lips." Those things are more normal. They don't necessarily speak of the same power of creation exhibited in Genesis.

So bara doesn't always mean creating in the sense of exnihilo, divine fiat creation, but in this context that is distinctively what it means. And the word "made" is just another word to affirm the same thing. We could say it is a synonym. And by the way, in Exodus, for you scholars, Exodus 34:10, asah is used as a synonym for bara in Exodus 34:10. So I see them used in synonym fashion.

We could say it this way. In the Genesis context this word, asah, is used to specify the kind of bara, the kind of creation of which the verse speaks. God is creating and in this creating He makes something that never existed. He is creating but in the creating, as verse 1 indicates, the broad picture, He is making things expressed by the use of the other word. And so in verse 7 He made the expanse. It was still creation, but it was a component of creation, it was the making of something that never before existed.

Now, I'm going to hurry and finish. The separation of water above the sky and below has led to much discussion, folks, much discussion. The question is what is this water? And, you know, I have to confess to you, I don't know. I don't know. It could be that clear out at the end of infinite space there is water. We know that there is water in the air, that we know. We feel the rain. There…there may be some other feature that we don't know about way at the other…at the very end of the limitless vault of heavenly space. I don't know. There are many who believe that there…there's a…in this creation there was created around the earth a canopy, a canopy of water.

This is the view of Whitcomb and Morris, that the waters above the expanse, the waters above heaven were…were like a vapor that just engulfed the whole earth and created a kind of a hothouse environment. And that's, they suggest, why animals lived so long and plants lived so long. You had animals living long enough to become dinosaurs. You had people living long enough to become like Methuselah, 900-plus years old because they were shielded from ultra-violet light because of this water canopy. And then at the flood, that canopy burst loose and drowned the earth, along with the tectonic cataclysm that occurred underneath the earth that broke up the basic elements of the earth and created the post-flood environment.

But we can't know that for certain. The suggestions are made that this vapor was a water vapor canopy up over the earth. There's nothing in here about that. So, folks, you can't be dogmatic about it. It seems a reasonable explanation. And the suggestion has been made that water vapor has the ability to transmit incoming solar radiation and to retain and disperse much of the radiation reflected from the earth's surface. So it would serve as a global greenhouse, maintaining a uniformly pleasant warm temperatures around the world.

They say that with nearly uniform temperatures, great air mass movements would be inhibited, windstorms would be unknown. With no global air circulation the hydrological cycle of the present world could not be implemented. There could be no rain except directly over the bodies of water from which it might have evaporated. With no global air circulation, because it's all protected by this canopy, there would be no turbulence, no dust particles transported in the upper atmosphere. The water vapor in the canopy would have been stable and not precipitate itself.

Further, the planet would have been maintained not only at uniform temperature, but at comfortable uniform humidities by means of daily local evaporation and condensation, like dew or ground fog. The combination further of warm temperature, adequate moisture everywhere would be conducive to extensive stands of lush vegetation over the world. No barren deserts and no ice caps. A vapor canopy would be effective in filtering out ultra-violet radiation, cosmic rays, other destructive energies and it goes on and on and on.

And then at the flood when God wanted to drown the earth, He just broke that thing loose and it plunged to earth and we were all exposed to the ultra-violet light and life was shortened up and people just lived 60 years after that. Is that really the way it was? Well it doesn't say that in Genesis. The text of Genesis doesn't specify a canopy, but it does say there were waters above and waters below. There have been scientists, good creation scientists who have said this canopy theory doesn't fly.

Robert Whitelaw and Walter Brown summarized the difficulties like this. "The heat problem, a large vapor or ice canopy would so increase heat that it would roast all living things if you have no movement of air and you just have this heat. The light problem," they suggest, "starlight, which God said would be for signs and seasons, could scarcely have been seen and sunlight could not have reached through with sufficient heat to support tropical plants. The pressure problem, a vapor canopy holding more than 40 feet water would increase such high pressure at its base that its temperature would exceed 220 degrees Fahrenheit.

"The support problem, neither vapor, liquid, nor ice canopy, could have physically survived for the many centuries between creation and the flood," a couple of thousand years. It would condense, evaporate, or vaporize, it wouldn't just stay there. And then the ultraviolet problem. "A canopy surrounding the atmosphere would not have been protected from ultraviolet light which would have disassociated water into hydrogen and oxygen, thus immediately destroying the canopy," and on and on and on.

Look, I'm not going to get into this argument. I haven't got any idea. All I know is there was water here and water up there. That's all I know. Now the canopy makes sense…there's a canopy…there was one up there somewhere, there was water up there somewhere. Obviously it didn't do what all those…maybe it didn't…maybe it wasn't water like the first group of scientists said it was, and maybe it wasn't doing what the second group of scientists thought it would do if it was up there. But it was up there.

Now you say, "That's a pretty simple non-scientific explanation." Well I'm a theologian. That's what the Bible says. It doesn't give an explanation of science. it just says water went up and some water stayed here. We could safely say this. The resolution may be as simple as this. God creating the kind of canopy, the kind of vault in the universe, the kind of water in the atmosphere that was controlled so as not to produce the ill effects that Whitelaw and Brown mentioned. We do know this. There was water up there and at the flood, water came pouring down, according to Genesis 7, and drowned the entire earth.

So, between the waters God created space. Look at this note, this is really interesting. Verse 7, end of the verse, "And it was so." Is that redundant? Is that redundant? He said in verse 6, "Let there be

an expanse in the midst of the waters." In verse 7, "And God made the expanse." And why does He add, "And it was so," is that just a redundant sort of editorial comment? No, it serves a very necessary purpose, very critical statement. There is no such comment in verse 3. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." It doesn't say, "And it was so."

I'll tell you why. That little phrase used here in verse 9, verse 11, verse 15, and verse 24 is used to affirm something that is fixed, something that doesn't change, something that has remained for all time. You can't say that after verse 3, "Let there be light and there was light," cause there's light and darkness, light and darkness, light and darkness. It's not fixed. But when you say God created the heavens, that's fixed. "And it was so" lends itself to the understanding of the firm and fixed and unchanging nature of that element of creation.

And verse 8 ends, "God called the expanse heaven." And by the way, He doesn't say it was good yet. He didn't say it on day one. He didn't say it on day two. He won't say it until verse 10 when the earth is habitable. Then He'll say "It was good," only after it's finally shaped into its habitable condition. And verse 8 ends, "God called the expanse heaven and there was evening and there was morning, a second day." He did it in a day. Created the firmament, the expanse, the heavens, the sky. We're ready for day three. Somewhere in here, just plant this thought, the angels were created. Do you know where? Stay tuned. I was going to tell you tonight but now I don't have any time.

I would just like to close with a little praise, if I could. Psalm 104 probably is as good as any. Listen to this. Psalm 104, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord, my God, Thou art very great. Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Thyself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters. He makes the clouds His chariot. He walks upon the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers."

Now if there was wind at the time of the creation, then maybe Whitcomb and Morris are wrong after all…or least they've overstated the effect of the canopy. But here is…here is the psalmist's praiseful recollection of God stretching out heaven, of God taking the water to the upper chambers. And he praises God saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And in verse 5 he says, "He established the earth upon its foundation so that it will not totter forever and ever. Thou dost cover it with the deep as with a garment." You can see all the creation allusions here affirming what happened. And we're going to see more in that Psalm as God separates the land from the sea and creates the springs and the valleys and the animals. It's a tremendous, tremendous text.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).